

October 2005

Precipitation: After most of the Washington/Baltimore area experienced the driest September ever recorded, October brought an unprecedented turnaround when most locations, including the three major airports, measured their wettest October on record. Monthly precipitation totals ranged generally between 9"-12". The majority of the rain fell in a 2-day deluge on the 7th and 8th, resulting in the wettest month since September 1999 at all three airports. A slow moving cold front coupled with the remnants of Tropical Storm Tammy resulted in drenching rain. Precipitation totals ranged from as little as 2" in Cumberland, MD, to more than a foot in portions of Harford County, MD. The metro areas received generally between 7"-9" with daily record rainfall totals reported at all three major airports on the 7th and 8th. The daily precipitation total of 4.37" at BWI on the 8th was only 0.01" shy of the all-time wettest October day ever recorded in Baltimore (October 10, 1922: 4.38"). Storm precipitation totals included 7.34" at DCA, 6.72" at BWI and 6.62" at IAD (4th greatest total ever recorded). According to press reports, the heavy rains flooded numerous roads and basements and resulted in the evacuation of 30 people from homes and several rescues from cars stalled on roads swamped by as much as 6 feet of water in Harford County. The soaking rains ended more than a month of dryness that ran from August through an extremely dry September in most of the area.

Later in the month, two additional but weaker storm systems brought more moisture to the area. On the 21st-22nd, rainfall totaled nearly an inch at IAD (0.95") while another system quickly followed on the 24th-25th with over an inch of rain reported at some locations, including 1.38" at IAD. This last event brought the season's first snowfall in the higher elevations of western Maryland and Virginia. In Garrett County, MD, up to 12" of snow blanketed the ground while portions of the Shenandoah Mountains measured 3"-5" of snow. According to press reports, up to 11,500 customers lost power when the heavy wet snow snapped trees, many still with leaves, and downed power lines. Even greater snowfall totals were noted on the Allegheny Plateau in West Virginia: Terra Alta (2,700 ft.) measured 18" of snowfall, Snowshoe (4,765 ft.) observed 14" and Canaan Valley (3,700 ft.) reported 13.5".

Temperature: For the 8th month in 2005, above normal temperatures prevailed across the Washington/Baltimore area. Monthly temperature departures were +1.6°F at DCA, +2.4°F at BWI and +3.8°F at IAD. It was the 4th warmest October ever recorded at IAD and the warmest since 1995 at both DCA and BWI. At IAD, the daily lows remained above freezing for the first time in October since 1984. At BWI, the mercury dropped to 32°F on the 29th, while lows at DCA remained at or above 40°F at night for the second consecutive October. Summer-like warmth was common the first week of the month with DCA and IAD recording 5 days with highs at or above 80°F. Above normal readings continued through the first two-thirds of month (1st-20th) as temperatures averaged nearly 5°F above normal at DCA. The chilliest day of the month occurred on the 25th as clouds, rain and easterly winds off the ocean held highs in the 40's, yielding the lowest maximum temperature at DCA since March 25. The cool readings were short-lived, however, as highs rebounded to the 70's by Halloween, marking the second consecutive Oct. 31st with well above normal temperatures.

OCTOBER 2005 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA

Location	Station Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (In.)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmIT	DepNmI	Max	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNmI	Yr to Date
National (DCA)	67.8	53.1	60.4	58.8	+1.6	82/2	40/28 ¹	9.41	3.22	+6.19	39.12
Baltimore (BWI)	66.4	49.1	57.8	55.4	+2.4	79/2	32/29	9.23	3.16	+6.07	39.67
Dulles (IAD)	67.8	49.7	58.8	55.0	+3.8	83/1	33/29 ²	9.22	3.37	+5.85	42.58
Andrews (ADW)	65.0	52.0	58.5	N/A	N/A	79/2	36/29	5.97	3.60	+2.37	

Other Occurrences: ¹29,²31

Looking Ahead to November: When will the first snow fall? In Washington, the largest single November snow event occurred in 1987 when 11.5" blanketed DCA. This event tied December 17, 1932, as the greatest single snowfall event during astronomical autumn in Washington. In the last 10 years, the first snow has fallen between early December and late January, except in 1997-98 when there was no snowfall of more than 1 inch. The earliest snows (>1") in Washington, D.C., fell on October 30, 1925, (2.2") and October 20, 1940, (1.4"). The earliest measurable snow ever recorded at DCA fell on October 10, 1979, (0.3"). DCA recorded no significant snowfall (total > 0.1") in the 1997-98 and 1972-73 seasons.

Snow Season First 1" (or greater) Snowfall at DCA

2004-2005	January 19
2003-2004	December 4
2002-2003	December 5
2001-2002	January 19
2000-2001	December 19

Snow Season First 1" (or greater) Snowfall at DCA

1999-2000	January 20
1997-1998	(No 1" amount recorded)
1998-1999	January 8
1996-1997	January 9
1995-1996	December 9